

Testimony concerning SB 234
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Presented by Alexandra Blasi, Executive Secretary
On behalf of
The Kansas State Board of Pharmacy
March 22, 2019

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas State Board of Pharmacy respectfully submits this testimony in support of SB 234. The bill would require all opiate medications listed in Schedule II, III, or IV of the Controlled Substance Act be prescribed electronically beginning July 1, 2021, with a few specific exceptions. Electronic prescribing is already allowed in Kansas and under federal law, and the Board believes most pharmacists and pharmacies either are or could be equipped to manage this change within a reasonable time period. It is important to note that this bill would impact all prescribers, not just physicians. The Board is ready and willing to take on any oversight. Due to the national opioid epidemic and the opportunities for fraud inherent in paper prescriptions, electronic prescribing helps protect the public.

The bill also creates a requirement for prescribers to seek a waiver of electronic prescribing in certain circumstances but exempts pharmacists from verifying any waiver. It is imperative that this bill not create a barrier to patient access due to mistakes or failures of the medical or pharmaceutical community. The Board anticipates that this waiver process could create additional work for the Board. Any costs to our agency would be in the form of staff time and resources associated with issuing waivers, reviewing complaints, and conducting relevant inspections and investigations to ensure compliance with state law. However, allowing sufficient time for compliance should help alleviate the need for waivers.

The Board believes the language agreed upon by all stakeholders that is contained within the bill provides adequate time for education to prevent unnecessary data entry errors or other technological glitches. Ultimately, electronic prescribing reduces prescription errors and ensures that patients can continue to receive their necessary medications in a safe and efficient manner. Though the process of electronic prescribing is not flawless, pharmacies work effectively with prescribers on a daily basis to put patients first and provide ongoing care.

The Board finds this bill consistent with many other states and supports passage.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Blasi, JD, MBA
Executive Secretary